

LIFE



SKIP WILLIAMSON

ZIEB NOV DEC

2 PENNY VAN HORN
A Revealing Dream

**4 KIM DEITCH and
FOWLTON MEANS**
The Strange Secret of Molly O'Dare, Part One

**20 TH. METZGER and
BOB FINGERMAN**
Mr. Hypno-Googoopizin' Man

24 GLENN HEAD
Uncle Morty's Carnival of Cruelty

26 RICHARD SALA
The Chuckling Whatsits, Part Five

35 DAVE COLLIER
78 R.P.M.

39 TED STEARN
Fuzz & Pluck, Part Three

48 KIMONKIM
BACK ISSUES

A REVEALING DREAM

PENNY
VAN HORN



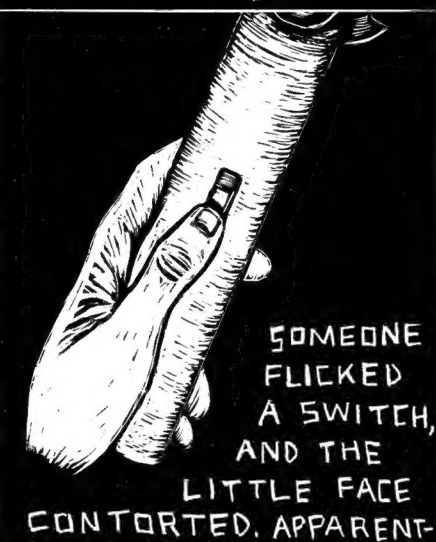
I WAS AT AN ALL-GIRL PARTY. I NOTICED EVERYONE CROWDING AROUND THE BED.



THE WOMEN WERE COOING LIKE DOVES. ON THE PILLOW WAS A LIGHT BROWN



VIBRATOR SPORTING THE HEAD OF JAMES BROWN!



SOMEONE FLICKED A SWITCH, AND THE LITTLE FACE CONTORTED. APPARENTLY, IT HAD 2 SPEEDS!



ALL OF THE WOMEN WANTED TO BE THE LAST TO LEAVE

The Strange Secret

of Molly O'dace



RECENTLY I
ATTENDED A
MEMORIAL FOR AN OLD
TIME MOVIE ACTOR
NAMED LARRY FARREL
AT THE TROUPER'S
CLUB IN
LOS ANGELES.



THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE EVENING
WAS A SHOWING OF THE VERY FIRST
FILM LARRY EVER APPEARED IN,
"THE FAIRY BALL," MADE BACK IN 1914.

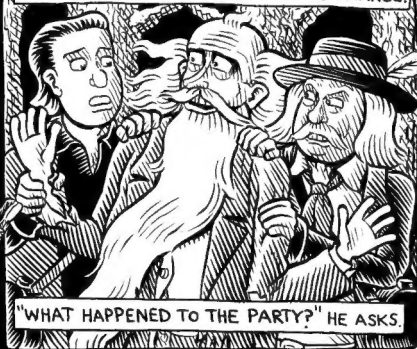


IN THE FILM, TWO ENGLISH WOODS-
MEN COME UPON A DEMENTED OLD
MAN DANCING IN THE WOODS.

THE
YOUNGER
OF THE TWO
WOODSMEN
IS
PLAYED BY TEEN-
AGED LARRY
FARREL.



AS THEY GRAB HOLD OF THE MAN,
HE SEEMS TO COME OUT OF A TRANCE.



"WHAT HAPPENED TO THE PARTY?" HE ASKS.



WHEN, ASKED, "WHAT
PARTY," HE REPLIES, "WHY
THE FAIRY BALL, OF COURSE!"



THEN HE NOTICES HIS BEARD AND
SOON DISCOVERS HE'S BEEN IN THE
WOODS FOR THIRTY LONG YEARS.

BUT AFTER A SOOTHING DRAUGHT IS GIVEN HIM, THE MAN TELLS HIS STORY.



ON WHAT SEEMED LIKE JUST A FEW DAYS EARLIER, HE WAS IN THE WOODS LOOKING FOR AN INTERESTING SUBJECT TO PAINT.



AFTER SETTING HIS EASEL UP IN FRONT OF A PRETTY STORYBOOK COTTAGE, HE LOOKS UP AND BEHOLDS A BREATHTAKINGLY BEAUTIFUL GIRL!



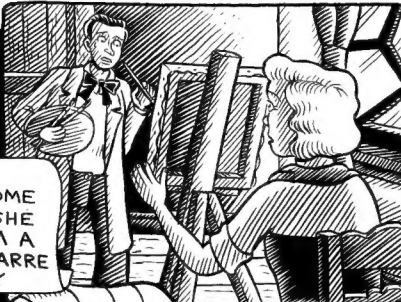
HE'S SO TAKEN WITH HER THAT HE IMPULSIVELY STARTS SKETCHING HER.



ONE THING LEADS TO ANOTHER AND SOON HE'S PAINTING HER PORTRAIT.



HOWEVER, HE
NOTICES THAT
SOMETHING IS
TROUBLING
HER,




AND
AFTER SOME
URGING, SHE
TELLS HIM A
VERY BIZARRE
STORY



NOT MANY
DAYS BEFORE,
SHE ENCOUNTERS
A LITTLE MAN
NOT MUCH BIGGER
THAN HER
HAND.



BEFORE
SHE EVEN
HAS A CHANCE
TO BE
STARTLED.



...HE BEGINS TO SERENADE
HER, WHICH SHE FINDS
UTTERLY ENCHANTING.



SO
MUCH SO
THAT WHEN THE
MAN RUNS UP THE
FRONT OF HER
DRESS AND KISSES
HER, SHE'S AT
FIRST
DELIGHTED!



BUT
WHEN SIX OTHERS
SHOW UP AND
BEGIN CRAWLING
ALL OVER HER,
SHE BECOMES
FRIGHTENED
AND FAINTS!



SHE
AWAKENS IN A
WONDROUS FAIRYLAND
ATMOSPHERE; AND
THE SEVEN MEN ARE
NOW NORMAL
SIZED!

THE FIRST OF THE SEVEN MEN THAT APPROACHED
HER RENEWS HIS WOOING; AND SO CHARMED
IS SHE BY THE AMBIANCE OF HER SURROUNDINGS,
THAT SHE AGAIN RESPONDS WITH FAVOR!

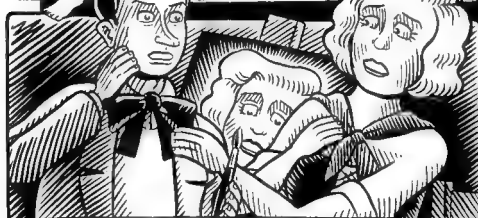
THIS CAUSES A
SQUABBLE AMONG THE
SEVEN MEN, WHO BEGIN
TO FIGHT FURIOUSLY
OVER HER!





SHE RUNS AWAY, BUT, SHE TELLS THE ARTIST, THE SEVEN LITTLE MEN HAVE BEEN PESTERING HER EVER SINCE.

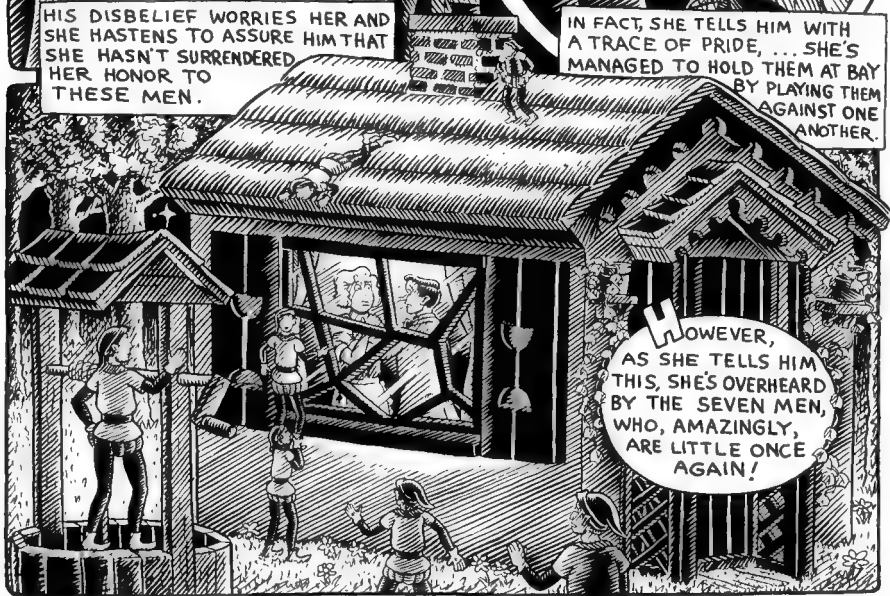
THE ARTIST SEEMS SKEPTICAL.



HIS DISBELIEF WORRIES HER AND SHE HASTENS TO ASSURE HIM THAT SHE HASN'T SURRENDERED HER HONOR TO THESE MEN.



IN FACT, SHE TELLS HIM WITH A TRACE OF PRIDE, ... SHE'S MANAGED TO HOLD THEM AT BAY BY PLAYING THEM AGAINST ONE ANOTHER.




HOWEVER, AS SHE TELLS HIM THIS, SHE'S OVERHEARD BY THE SEVEN MEN, WHO, AMAZINGLY, ARE LITTLE ONCE AGAIN!

THE MAN
PROMISES TO
RETURN THE
FOLLOWING
DAY TO
FINISH HER
PORTRAIT,


BUT BEFORE HE GETS OUT OF THE WOODS, HE
ENCOUNTERS THE SEVEN LITTLE MEN WHO
REQUEST A BRIEF WORD WITH HIM.

THEY TELL HIM
THAT THE GIRL IS
MERELY CONFUSED AND
HAS MISUNDERSTOOD
THEM. THEY CLAIM TO
HAVE NO EVIL
INTENTIONS
TOWARD HER OR
ANYONE ELSE
AND OFFER
TO PROVE IT.

THEY LEAD HIM TO A CLEARING, WHERE A BIG PARTY IS GOING ON.



HE'S SOON CAUGHT UP IN IT ALL, DRINKING AND DANCING.




AND IN WHAT SEEMED LIKE MERE HOURS, THIRTY YEARS WENT BY. NOW HERE HE IS, AN OLD MAN TELLING A DUBIOUS STORY.


PERHAPS IT WAS JUST A DREAM!




THEN HE GLANCES AT HIS PAINTING KIT, ALL OVERGROWN WITH WEEDS.



"WELL THIS IS NO DREAM," HE SHOUTS, "HERE'S ANNE'S PORTRAIT."



"WHAT NAME IS THAT?" SAYS THE ELDER WOODSMAN.

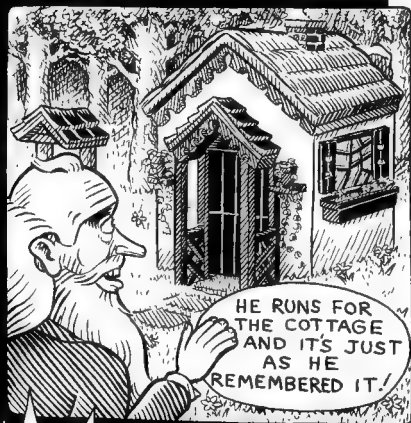


"WHY, ANNE, ANNE JEFFREYS," HE ANSWERS.

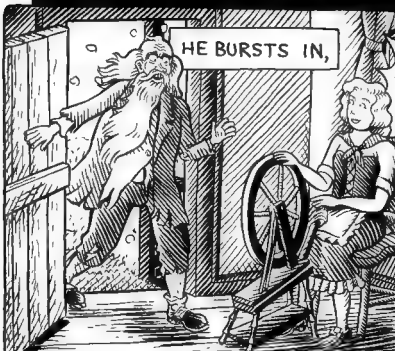
THE ELDER WOODSMAN DECLARES HE'S KNOWN ANNE JEFFREYS ALL HIS LIFE AND SHE'S NEITHER YOUNG NOR BEAUTIFUL, BUT A SAD OLD HAG WHO LIVES IN A MISERABLE SHACK OVER YONDER.



YES, THAT'S WHERE SHE LIVES, BUT THE REST IS UNTRUE! COME! I'LL SHOW YOU!



HE RUNS FOR THE COTTAGE AND IT'S JUST AS HE REMEMBERED IT!




HE BURSTS IN,

AND THERE'S ANNE, LOVELY AS EVER!



AND WHEN SHE KISSED HIM, HE TRANSFORMED INTO A HAND-SOME YOUNG MAN AGAIN!

THE WOODSMEN FOLLOW; BUT ALL THEY SEE IS A RUDE, RUNDOWN SHACK.



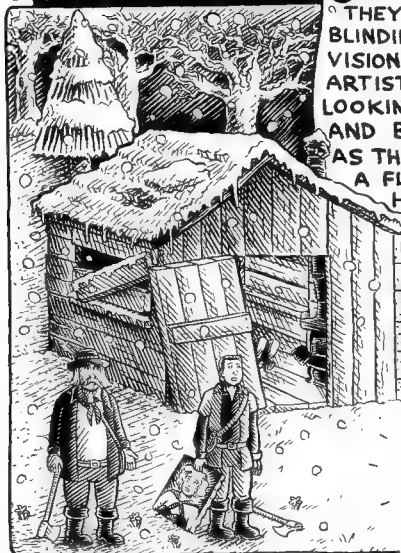
INSIDE THEY FIND THE MAN LOOKING OLD AGAIN, AND DEAD IN THE ARMS OF A WITHERED OLD HAG!

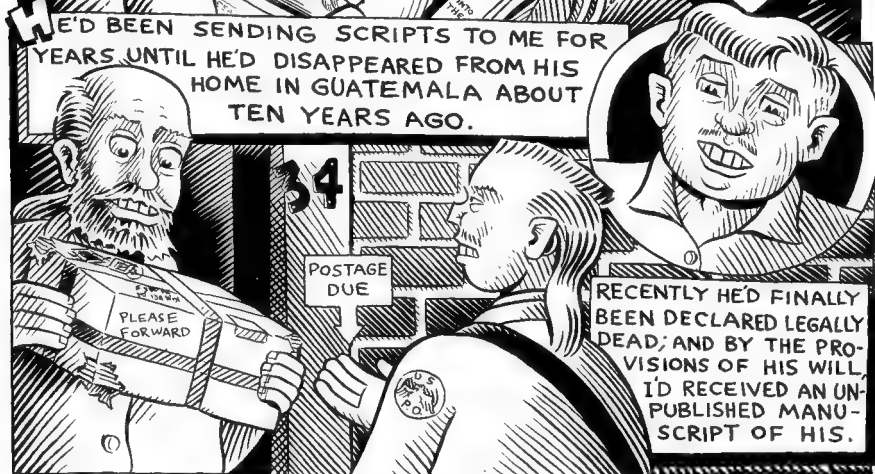
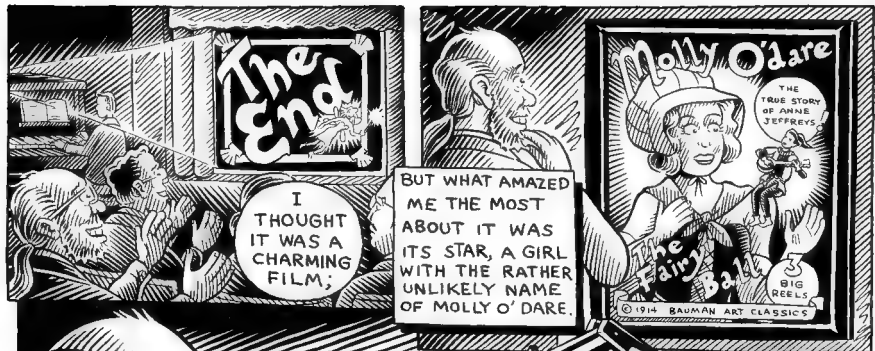


THEN THE YOUNGER MAN NOTICES A BRIGHT LIGHT COMING THROUGH THE DOOR!



JUST OUTSIDE, THEY BEHOLD A BLINDING, BRIGHT VISION OF THE ARTIST AND ANNE LOOKING YOUNG AND BEAUTIFUL AS THEY ASCEND A FLIGHT OF HEAVENLY STAIRS INTO THE SKY!





WHAT FOLLOWS IS BASED ON AN APPARENTLY POSTHUMOUS MANUSCRIPT BY FOWLTON MEANS.

MOVIE NIGHT AT GORTON'S

THIS MAY BE A TRUE STORY, ALTHOUGH I'M NOT ABSOLUTELY SURE ABOUT THAT.



IT'S 1947 AT GORTON'S BAR ON THE VENICE AMUSEMENT PIER, NOT FAR FROM LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA.

WHY, YOU'RE
THE VERY IMAGE OF
MOLLY O'DARE!



HA! D.W.'S
AT IT AGAIN!

ON WEDNESDAYS, RARE
MOVIES FROM HOLLYWOOD'S
EARLY YEARS ARE SHOWN.

HE PULLS THAT STUFF
ON EVERY LITTLE CUTIE
THAT
COMES
IN HERE



AND A GOOD MANY OLD TIME
MOVIE VETERANS CAN USUALLY BE
SEEN HERE, INCLUDING, ON THIS
NIGHT, PIONEER
MOVIE DIRECTOR D.W. GRIFFITH!

HEY! SIT DOWN!

WHY, SEE FOR YOURSELF! THE RESEMBLANCE IS UNCANNY!

WILL YOU PLEASE GO AWAY!

IT'S A TRADITION AT GORTON'S TO KICK OFF MOVIE NIGHT WITH AN EPISODE FROM ONE OF MOLLY O'DARE'S OLD SERIALS.

EASY DOES IT, D.W.

I'LL GET YOU A CAB.

BUT BILLY!

...I WAS MERELY REMARKING ON THE AMAZING....

GIGGLE

MY! MY! HOW THE MIGHTY HAVE FALLEN!

YES INDEED.

Y'KNOW, THERE ACTUALLY IS A REMARKABLE RESEMBLANCE.

INTRODUCING LARRY FARREL, ANOTHER RELIC OF BYGONE DAYS.

AND FOWLTON MEANS REPORTER AT LARGE.

BUT TAKE IT FROM ME, MISTER. MOLLY O'DARE IS DEAD!



I OUGHT TO KNOW.

SEE THAT PICTURE?

THAT'S A
PICTURE OF MOLLY AND OLD COLONEL GORTON
JUST BEFORE THEY WERE LOST AT SEA IN
1922.



GORTON USED
TO OWN THIS PLACE

BACK WHEN IT WAS A SPEAKEASY.




BELIEVE IT OR NOT,
THAT SKINNY KID ON
THE LEFT IS ME!

GORTON WAS AN ODD RELIC
OF THE OLD WEST WHO BACKED
MOLLY'S LAST SERIAL.



I WAS HER LEADING MAN.

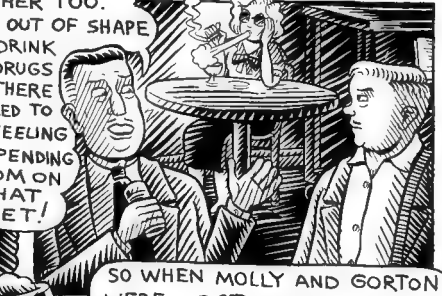


IT WAS MY FIRST MAJOR PART AND SHE WAS NICE TO ME; VERY NICE!


BUT THERE WAS SOMETHING TERRIBLY SAD ABOUT HER TOO.



SHE WAS OUT OF SHAPE FROM DRINK AND DRUGS AND THERE SEEMED TO BE A FEELING OF IMPENDING DOOM ON THAT SET!



SO WHEN MOLLY AND GORTON WERE LOST AT SEA WHILE SHOOTING SOME LOCATION STUFF ON MOLLY'S YACHT, I WAS SADDENED, BUT NOT GREATLY SURPRISED.



THEY WERE BOTH FIVE SHEETS TO THE WIND IN STORMY WEATHER WHEN THEY TOOK OFF.



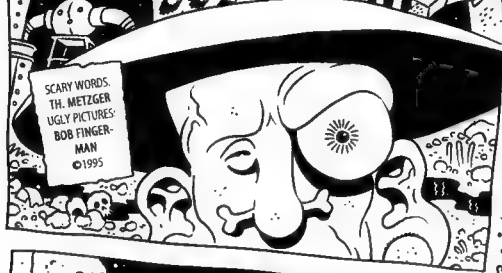
EVERYONE WARNED THEM IT WAS A CRAZY THING TO DO.

MR. HYPNO-GOOGOOPIZIN' MAN

A HOT NIGHT, HOTTER THAN AN OVER-USED BRAKE SHOE AND SMELLED TWICE AS BAD.

MY OLD ARMY BUDDY, SHARKIE GUMMA, LOSING BODY HEAT MIGHTY FAST.

SCARY WORDS.
TH. METZGER
UGLY PICTURES
BOB FINGER-
MAN
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NO DOUBT ABOUT IT, SHE WAS AT IT AGAIN, SUCKING THE EYEBALLS OUT OF HER BOYFRIENDS, LEAVING CORPSES ALL OVER THE CITY.

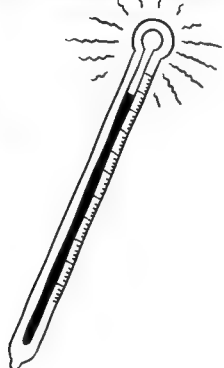
JEEZZZZ!

OUT, OUT, VILE JELLY!

GLH.



WHEN I GET MAD I GET HOT AND WHEN I GET HOT MY ÜBER-PEEPER GETS A HARD-ON.





I HEARD THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE
THAT LUCREZIA 3X WAS TRYING TO
COOK UP A JELLY BABY.

\$1.99
A QT.!

JUMBO
DREAM
JUICE

PREA
JUICE

I'M LOOKING
FOR LUCREZIA 3X.

AIN'T SEEN HER.
WHY DON'T YOU TAKE
YOUR SORRY ASS
AND - -

FAST
LUCK
LOTION

CLEOPATRA
CLAIRVUANCE
OIL
SOLD HERE



I...I...I...

JUST TELL
ME WHERE
SHE IS.

DON'T GO
SO SOON,
HONEY.

TRY UNDER
THE PINKMAN
BRIDGE.

THE FRAILS CAN'T RESIST MY
MANLY OCULAR MOJO-FUNK.



A HALF HOUR LATER.

ANY OF YOU
REFRIED TURDS KNOW
WHERE I CAN FIND
LUCREZIA 3X?



YOU FOUND
ME, BIG BOY, NOW
WHAT YOU GOING TO
DO WITH ME?



SWEET JEEZER, THE RUMORS WERE RIGHT. SHE REALLY WAS MAKING A JELLY BABY. HOW MANY EYEBALLS HAD SHE SUCKED OUT TO GET THAT MUCH GOO?

GGHHNNRRRR.

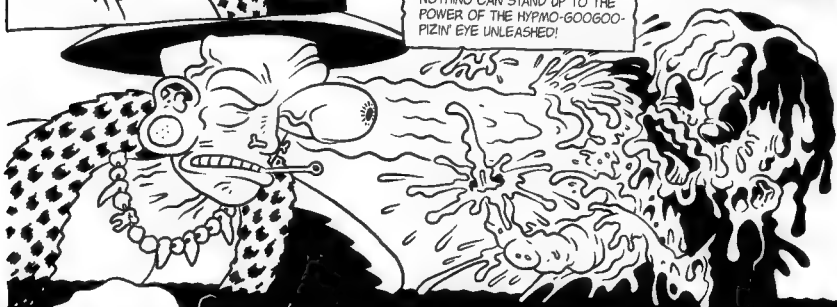
COME ON, BIG BOY, LAY THAT FAMOUS GAZE ON ME.

SWEET RELIEF. ONE THING I CAN'T RESIST IS WHEN A WOMAN GIVES MY CORNEA A TONGUE BATH.





NOTHING CAN STAND UP TO THE
POWER OF THE HYPNO-GOOGOO-
PIZIN' EYE UNLEASHED!



PUN-LEEZE,
PUN-LEEZE! I
NEED YOU!

HER EYEBALL-SUCKING DAYS WERE
OVER, AND THE MERCURY WAS
FALLING FAST.





VISIT THE SIDESHOW!
GOOF ON THE ODDBALLS!
REJOICE IN YOUR NORMALCY!

Uncle Morty's
CARNIVAL OF CRUELTY
Family Fun!!

see:

FREE HOT DOGS

MELTING SNOWMAN

HOT DOG BOY
LAFF AT HIS PAIN!

CHAINSAW
SWORDFISH
BATTLE TO THE DEATH!

Kelvin the Karmic
JACK-IN-THE-BOX!

NORMALCY
DICER/SLICER

SCARY FUN!

FILET THE LOSER!

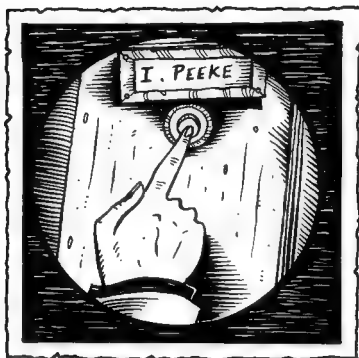
GOOD EATIN'

SNOW CONE
FUN!

ENTER HERE!!
PAY AS YOU
LEAVE

ONWARD
SILENT
SOLIDERS

© '95 GCM



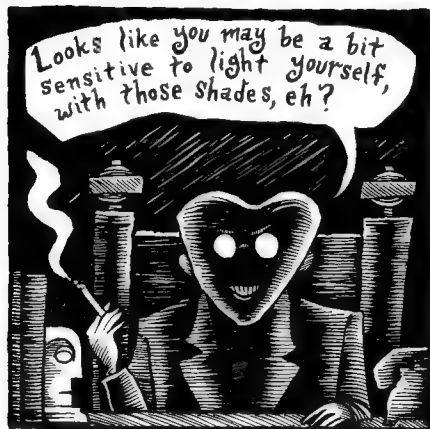
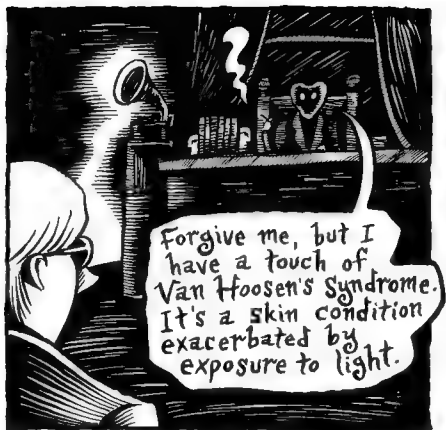
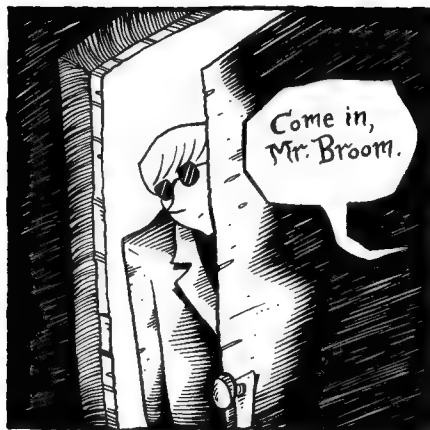
the Chuckling Whatsit

© 1995 Richard Sala

Previously ~

Broom is the new "Venus," astrology columnist for the Guardian. He allows Abigail Aberdevine to search the apartment of his predecessor, the late Cyril Root, for information about outsider artist Emile Tarnac, whom Root once researched. Broom learns that several astrology columnists have been slain by a maniac not unlike the infamous Gull Street Ghoul. He visits the Ghoul Appreciation Society Headquarters, then learns that Abigail is missing. Her employer offers Broom her job.





This fellow Jarnac ~ he wasn't appreciated as an artist while he was alive. He made primitive little whatsits like that one on the table. Study it.



Broom ~ I've got to have the definitive Jarnac collection. And I need to know everything there is to know about him.



I'm aware of the basics, but I'm counting on you to dig deeper ~ as deep as you can go!



There's an envelope on the table. Pick it up. It's your first payment.



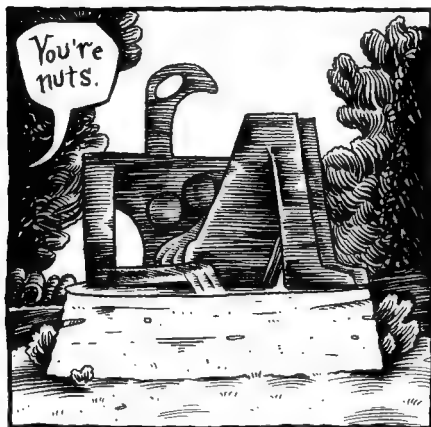
Um ... about Abigail Aberdevine ~

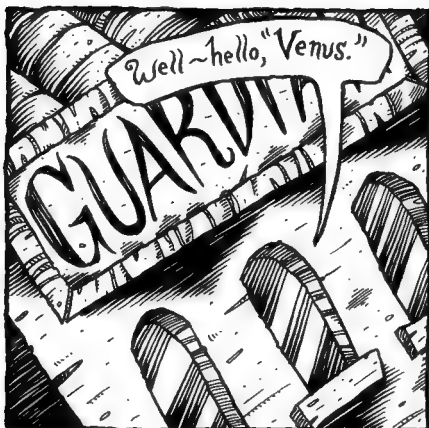


Oh yes. Well ~ sadly, I have no patience with irresponsible people.

So it's up to you now, Mr. Broom. Remember ~ as deep as you can go!







Well~hello, "Venus."



Right on time ~ your first column.

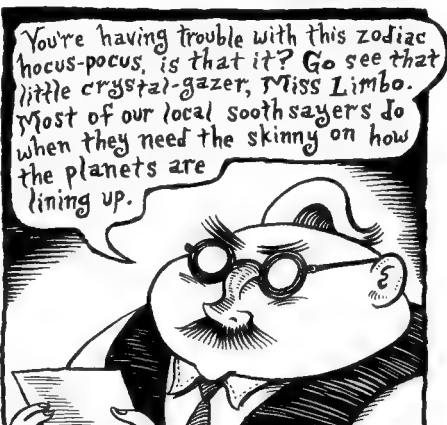
And my last. You forgot to tell me you were putting me on some psycho's hit list.



Oh come on, Broom. I figured you knew about that ~

Besides, I got a better sig.

Wait, wait~



You're having trouble with this zodiac hocus-pocus, is that it? Go see that little crystal-gazer, Miss Limbo. Most of our local soothsayers do when they need the skinny on how the planets are lining up.



She's supposed to have a real knack for that junk ~

Forget it. I quit.

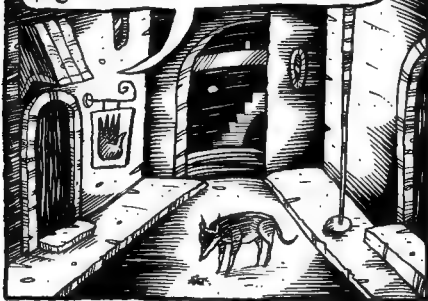


Broom! Dammit! I should've known you'd let me down again! You're unreliable!

Someday you're gonna get involved in something you can't just duck out of any time you please!



...And so that's what I need ~ the lowdown on "Venus" ~ and whether he ever discussed any projects outside of his column.



I knew Cyril, of course. He came to me for consultation, and I often helped him with his charts. Hfotoscope writers from all the papers come to see me.



Occasionally, we'd all get together ~ just informal soirees, cocktail parties ~ that sort of thing.



Cyril kept a low profile at these affairs, but I recall one particular evening when he was eager to tell us about a book he was writing.



It was a strange story about a mad shoemaker who killed himself. Most of the group laughed it off and continued with their gossip.



But his tale disturbed me. Later I had nightmares about it ~ even what you might call visions.

This wasn't about someone named Jarnac, was it?

Yes~ that was the name~ Jarnac.



He lived in Crow's Creek, a village on the north coast. He was quiet, gruff, kept to himself. He earned money around town as a cobbler and handyman.



An old windmill, located in hilly terrain outside of town, was his home and workshop. He'd found it abandoned and fixed it up. He never let anyone inside, though, while he lived there.



One day, a doctor named Vogardus was passing through town...

He recognized Jarnac as a former patient of his ~ from an asylum for the criminally insane. Jarnac had been institutionalized after committing a brutal murder, but he escaped and was never caught.



Asking around, Vogardus found out where Jarnac lived, and learned that he was now a well-regarded, if eccentric, member of the community.



That night, Vogardus journeyed to the windmill and discovered Jarnac hanging from a beam, a suicide.



...But that was only the beginning.



So you believe your colleagues were killed by someone with a grudge against astrologers?



What else could it be? They had nothing else in common!



to be continued

78 R.P.M.

There was this weird, voice-like sound that emitted from ever strands of encoded telegraph messages were uncoiled at rapid speed, Thomas Alva Edison had noticed--he was thinking about this and about how the sound waves from the human voice could cause a piece of paper to vibrate, and how these vibrations could move a needle!



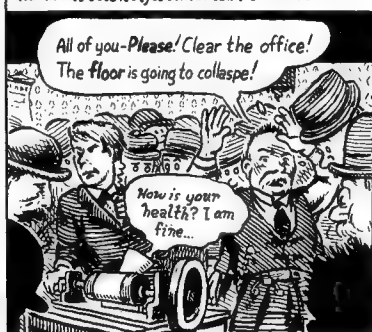
He already was a wealthy young man. In the same way that William Gates would later provide a missing part for IBM computers, Edison had previously played an important role in the development of Bell's telephone!



It all made perfect sense--the vibrations--the needle against the tin foil mounted on the screw-like cylinder--and yet when it **worked** it was still a shock! Edison later said: "I was never so taken aback in all my life!"



Edison's first public display of his talking machine in *The Scientific American's* offices ~



When you get right down to it, all that exists outside our minds and bodies are just **things** and people have forever picked up and discarded things, seemingly at random! The phonograph was picked up by people in a big way--initially, a single demonstration model could earn \$1,800 per week; in those pre-duplication days, singers sang the same song over and over again--to a maximum of three recorders--around the clock!



And yet within 50 years of its discovery, America's enthusiasm for the phonograph had died completely! Nation-wide, Victorolas which once proudly adorned the finest living-rooms or parlors were relegated to attic status...



Right from the start, Edison belved that the public's reaction to his invention was *all wrong!* People were using his phonograph as a mere toy. Mindless! Like a toboggan!



But Edison's most baleful source of woe came along almost exactly 100 years ago in the form of **Emile Berliner!** There was no room for compromise in Edison's mind—cylinders were what the phonograph was all about! But Berliner with these goddamn flat discs—"plates" as they were then called—had different ideas.



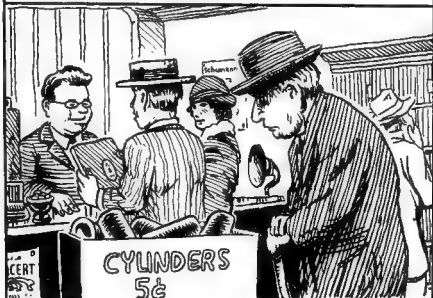
The bitterest pill of all that Edison had to swallow must've been the knowledge that, at the time, he was *right!* The fact is, pre-World War I cylinders and their players give a better sound; louder, clearer, than their disc contemporaries!



As Japanese auto executives found out during visits to America in the late 1950's: the people will take your invention and run with it!



The Edison Company kept at it, making machines and cylinders for an ever-dwindling group of hard-core users, but by 1929 the towel was thrown in. Thomas Edison had lived to see the public repudiate one of his inventions.



The cylinder was done in by perceptions of a different sort, perceptions shaped by advertising! And a large amount of this advertising centered around a single, simple yet powerful *image!*



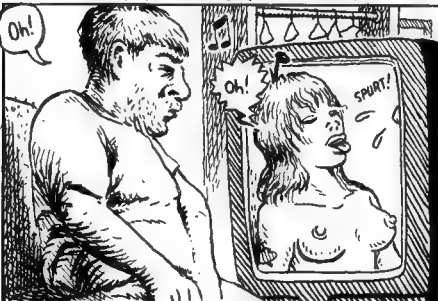
The image got out to the big public long after Francis Barraud, a 38 year-old London artist, started a painting of his dog sitting in front of a dull, black Edison cylinder phonograph. It was sound, as far as compositions go, and yet somehow it did not work. A friend offered some constructive criticism...



The rest, as they say, is history... Francis Barraud spent the rest of his life painting knockoffs of 'His Master's Voice'. Nipper died in 1895 and was belatedly honored 54 years later with a fancy plaque over his grave...



In the case of the early years of videotape for the home, instead of discs and cylinders, it was VHS vs. Sony's Beta format. A major issue at the time was porn on video, something Sony was philosophically opposed to. (It's hard to believe now, but at one time there were some people who thought porn could be kept off video!)



Barraud took the painting down the road to the European headquarters of the Berliner company where they not only lent him the horn required, but offered to buy the painting--provided that he change the Edison machine to one of their disc players!



Discs were on a roll! After winning a legal victory, Berliner changed its name to Victor; Victor was bought by RCA in 1929; RCA was later bought by General Electric... corporate structures changed, but the dog remained the same--at least until the '80' when Nipper was reintroduced sans phonograph, with his lil' pup pal Chipper!



By 1901, Edison's cylinders were on their way out, on the same road to oblivion that "Beta" format video tape was to later travel!

...and I can assure you that the Sony Corporation will never allow the use of its new Beta format videotape by pornographers!



Beta, of course, went down in flames! Sony failed to take in to account the west's passion for porn, or the eagerness of so many couples to record their sexual congeries!



Eventually, Edison acquiesced and began producing discs and disc phonographs. But instead of laying the sound in the grooves in a flat, back and forth way as in the Berliner method still in use in today's phonographs (fig a), Edison stubbornly stuck with the **hill & dale** method that he invented along with the cylinder (fig b). Ask any **runner** about some of the problems with hills. For Edison, it meant one-sided records a full $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick!



The Edison name on discs did little to slow the decline in the phonograph industry. On the 50th anniversary of his invention, Edison repeated those immortal first words. Prophetically, this was broadcast on radio.



Those words of Edison's, first shouted in 1877, were a precursor to his lame approach to recording! He did not understand music, and those who bought the simple, vapid works on the Edison label wore their lack of intelligence almost like a badge of pride! In the end, his invention got away from him because—as computer companies today such as Microsoft are beginning to realize—a medium needs a message!

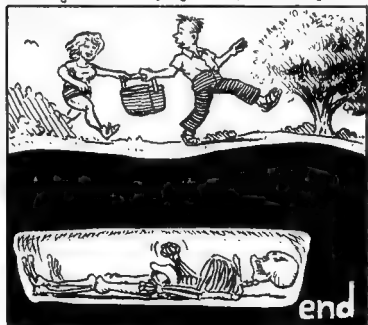
In Edison's case, his lack of taste was exacerbated by the fact that, from childhood on, he was almost **totally deaf**!



Despite the existence of a loyal core of cylinder buyers in the Deep South, it was all over for the Edison label by 1929. The whole industry was in turmoil; people were putting their Victorolas in their attics; sales dropped from 104 million in 1927, to a mere 6 million in 1931. Edison himself couldn't even go into a darkened theater and enjoy one of his few pleasures apart from work anymore—like other deaf people, he was **totally shut out** from this new **talking picture, radio era**!



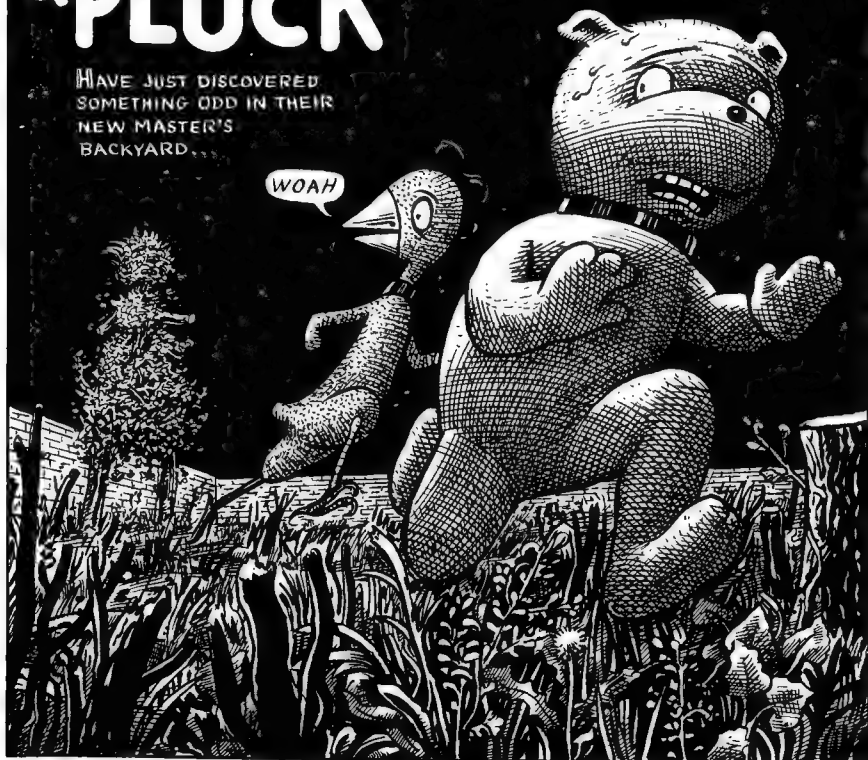
Change hurts a lot! Even when the phonograph was first introduced, there were music lovers who could not bear it! "That's not real music!", they insisted! All those people are now dead & forgotten, while everybody else is up here having fun!

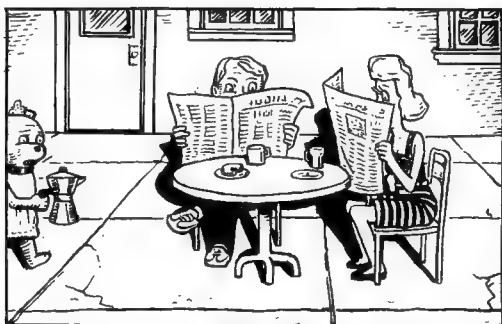


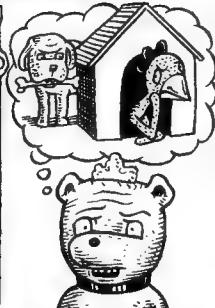
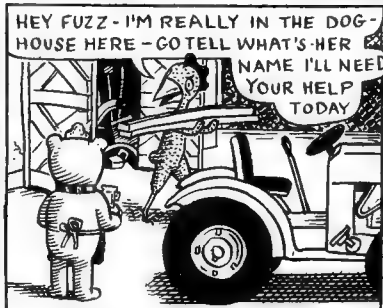
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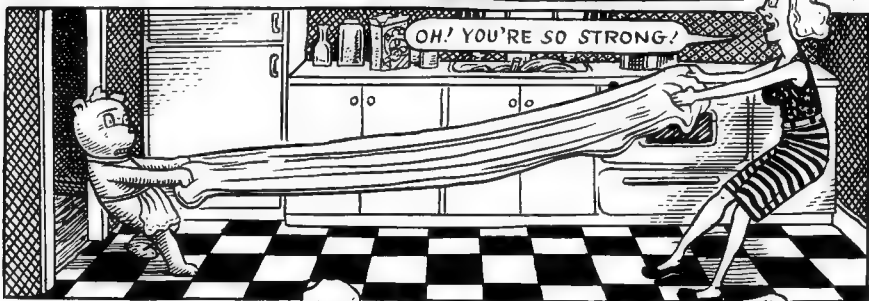
FUZZ & PLUCK

HAVE JUST DISCOVERED
SOMETHING ODD IN THEIR
NEW MASTER'S
BACKYARD...

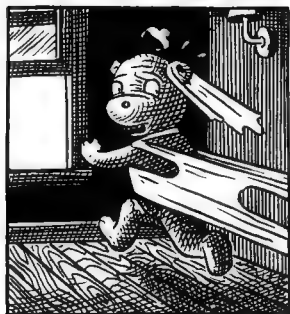
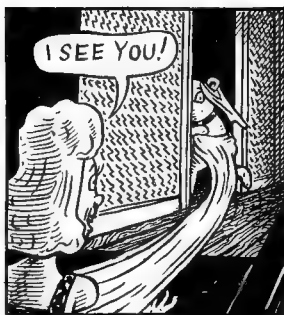
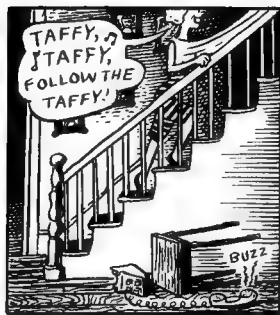


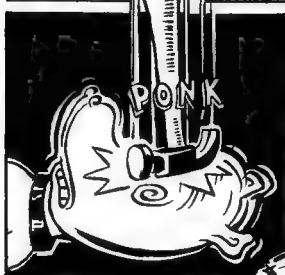
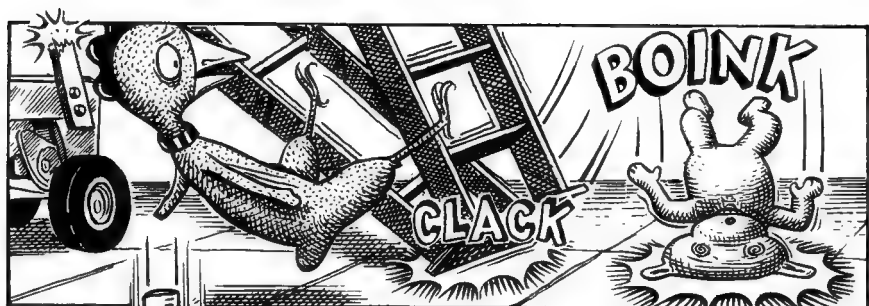












HOW ABOUT IF YOU LET ME
USE FUZZ HERE, AND I
WON'T SAY ANYTHING
ABOUT YOU HAVING THE
HOTS FOR A STUFFED
ANIMAL, HMM?

WELL...
OKAY

NO NO!
THAT
WAY!

WELL!

AND SO
PLUCK FINISHES
CONSTRUCTING
AN INSTRUMENT
OF DESTRUCTION
WHICH WILL ANSWER
HIS MASTER'S
CHALLENGE

HMMM...

I DON'T
GET IT

CONTINUED...

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"I'm not a religious person — but art is my religion. It's what keeps me going. It's important to me. I've let a lot of other things go because of it. But it's what livin' is to me. I won't feel bad when my time comes to die because I feel like I'm creating a body of work, and if it's good enough, maybe it'll live beyond me. It's an expression, a form of life in itself."

—KIM DEITCH

Ah, Deitch fans, you thought he'd forgotten, didn't you? Way, way back in 1989, K.D. had wrapped up his two-issue serial *SHADOWLAND*, a grisly, horrific, and disturbing yarn about the life and times of young Al Ledicker, with a deus-ex-machina appearance by the previously comatose Ledicker Senior, "Doc." As the story drew to a close, Doc vanished down a tunnel dug by the bizarre, gnomish "Grey Ones," leaving Al (and the readers) to puzzle about what it all meant—not least the mystery surrounding the lovely orphan and future movie star Molly O'Dare, who was somehow tangled up in all of this. Not content with tantalizing readers just a little, Deitch tacked on a bewildering two-page sequence (titled "Walla Walla") that showed Molly on a South Seas island with a group of dancing pygmies. (He also teased readers with yet another "preview" of this story-to-come in *BLAB!*) What did it all mean? Would we ever know?

Well, you're about to find out, as Deitch returns to Molly, Doc Ledicker, and the "Grey Ones" with "The Strange Secret of Molly O'Dare." "Strange Secret" will be serialized in this and the next two issues of *ZERO ZERO*, finally resolving what is actually the fourth novel-length Deitch saga concocted within the last ten or eleven years. (The other three being the two L.A. Reader-published weekly serials "HOLLYWOODLAND" [1984] and "A SHROUD FOR WALDO" [1990], and the elaborate biography of Waldo and his creator, or channeller, Ted Mishkin that wove its way through *RAW* magazine, *PICTOPIA*, *THE MISHKIN FILE*, and the *WALDOWORLD* mini-series during most of the early '90s.)

Four big Kim Deitch stories in a decade—what have we done to deserve such a bounty?

As you may have surmised by now, I'm an unregenerate, unapologetic Kim Deitch fan, and I had decided to take this page to explain in just a few words what his work means to me. A week and a half (and various increasingly unreadable drafts) later, I find that Kim's appeal is near impossible to squeeze into words. How does one explain that his (on the surface) naive approach to perspective and anatomy masks a marvelous sense of design and unequalled narrative intelligence? What is it about his work that seems, all at the same time, nostalgic, modern, and utterly timeless? There can be no doubt that among the underground cartoonists, he is the quintessential yarn spinner (only the Texans, Gilbert Shelton and Jack Jackson, come close). Is it an innate sense of decency (or, on the other hand, perversity) that allows him to depict the most peculiar sexual shenanigans (including the incestuous seduction of Al Ledicker by his Aunt in *SHADOWLAND*, and Molly's various naughtinesses in the current story) with such cool dispatch, where most of his fellow undergrounders would be slaving over their drawing boards?

Hell, I can't figure it out. All I can say is, it's great to see Kim back in his usual terrific form, and whether it's your first exposure to his work or you've been grooving on him for decades, I hope you enjoy it to pieces. We'll be seeing you next month with the middle portion of "The Strange Secret of Molly O'Dare."

— KIM THOMPSON

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RESOURCES: Regrettably, the *Shadowland/Ledicker/Molly O'Dare* story "The Crafton Curse" is currently out of print, having appeared only in the FBI-published *SHADOWLAND* comic. (The prologue, "Young Ledicker," can still be purchased as part of *WEIRDO* #19, available from Last Gasp.) Check with your local underground comic dealer to see if he has a couple of copies squirreled away. Most of Deitch's other major comics work (with the exception of the adaptation of *EATING RAOUL* he did in the '80s) is available, however. *HOLLYWOODLAND* and *A SHROUD FOR WALDO* were both collected by Fantagraphics Books, and are both available from the publisher (although *HOLLYWOODLAND* is down the merest handful of copies in the warehouse). The "Waldo" sequence that debuted in *RAW* is all available in a series of six Fantagraphics publications: *BOULEVARD OF BROKEN DREAMS* (reprinting the *RAW* story of the same title); *THE MISHKIN FILE* (an original sequel); *PICTOPIA* #2 (including a color section of Waldo "stills"); and the three-issue mini-series *WALDOWORLD*. Fantagraphics has also published two more Deitch compilations, *ALL-WALDO COMICS* (featuring earlier escapades by the feline) and *BEYOND THE PALE* (a gargantuan compendium of the best of Deitch from 1969 to 1984). Call 800-657-1100 to get a copy of Fantagraphics' nice new catalogue (or to make your order if you have a credit card), or write us at FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS, 7563 Lake City Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115. Also recommended is *THERE'S NO BUSINESS LIKE SHOW BUSINESS*, a one-shot published by 3-D Zone which can still be purchased for a mere \$3.00 postpaid from The 3-D Zone, 811 Hyperion Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90029. And there is a very fine *COMICS JOURNAL* interview with Kim (conducted by the estimable editor of *BLAB!*, Monte Beauchamp), in #123, available from those ruffians at Fantagraphics.

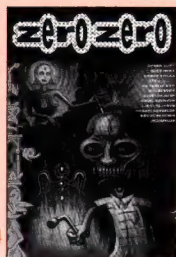
PAST: (what you missed)



MAY/JUNE 1995! Sala's "Chuckling Whatsit" begins, the premiere of "Homunculus" by Mack White, new "Trashman" story by Spain, plus Andersson, Collier, Head, Mats!?, Mazzucchelli, Stack, and Wayno!



JULY 1995! Soothing Valium cover! Enervating Sandlin back cover! Plus Andersson, Collier, Head, Newgarden, Sala, Stack, Stearn, Williamson, and Doofus creator Rick Altergott's insane "Douche Bag Dougan"!



AUGUST 1995! Spectacular two-color Al Columbia strip! The premiere of Kaz/Georgarakis's "Meat Box" series! Plus Jeff Johnson, Carol Tyler, Dave Collier, Richard Sala, Ted Stearn, and a back cover by Mark Beyer!



SEPTEMBER 1995! Superb Joe Coleman cover painting! Big new Max Andersson story featuring Car-Boy! Plus White's "Homunculus," Ware, Collier, several Deitch one-pagers, and the conclusion of Kaz/Georgarakis's "Meat Box"!

PRESENT: (do it now!)

FUTURE: (what's coming up)

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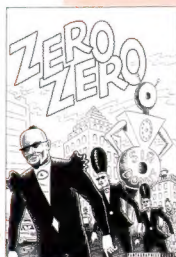
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MARCH/APRIL 1996! Extra-thick anniversary issue! Deitch's "Strange Secret" ends, Sala's "Whatsit" continues, plus Andersson, Beyer, Columbia, Diana, Johnson, Prewitt, Stearn, Valium, White, and a cover by Charles Burns!

